

Comment on FR Doc # 2023-19177

Dear Helen Koppe and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule for ATF 2022R-17. My name is Dr. Daniel Semenza and I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice and the Department of Urban-Global Public Health at Rutgers University. I am also the Director of Interpersonal Violence Research at the New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center, housed at Rutgers University.

I am in favor of the proposed rule clarifying the definition of “engaged in business,” which would increase background checks and ensure that all of those involved in the selling of firearms are subject to the same appropriate regulations. All sellers making a profit from selling firearms must be licensed and required to run background checks on their customers. My research suggests that the availability of firearms in a community through legal dealers increases the risk for gun violence, particularly in neighborhoods high in concentrated disadvantage (Semenza et al., 2022). Furthermore, the presence of licensed firearm dealers with serious violations such as selling to prohibited buyers or failing to record sales is associated with greater risk for violent crime such as homicide in local communities (Stansfield et al., 2023).

All firearms are initially sold into the public through licensed firearm dealers. Many of them eventually make their way into the black market where they are sold illegally via a variety of channels including straw purchases, theft, and middlemen dealers (Braga et al., 2021; Chesnut et al., 2017; Hureau & Braga, 2018). Illegally acquired firearms are frequently used in the commission of shootings and homicides throughout the country. As such, it is imperative that we properly define who has the right to legally sell firearms so that the ATF can provide appropriate oversight and regulation to ensure that those licensed do not contribute to the illicit supply of weapons that fuels so much of the violence in America.

Sincerely,
Dr. Daniel Semenza

References

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